

## CHAPTER II

### BUSBY'S BORE—SYDNEY'S SECOND SOURCE OF WATER SUPPLY, 1830-1858

JOHN BUSBY, who arrived in the colony from England in February, 1824, as Mineral Surveyor to the Government, recommended that water from the Lachlan Swamps (now Centennial Park) be delivered by a tunnel or "bore" to a 15-million gallon reservoir at the Racecourse (now Hyde Park). The tunnel, but not the reservoir, was approved, and legislative authority for construction and maintenance was given by the first Water Supply Act of Australia, the Water Tunnel Act (4 William IV No. 1) passed in 1833.

Work on the tunnel started in September, 1827, at the south-eastern corner of Hyde Park. Because of the unmanageable and unskilled nature of the convict labour and unforeseen difficulties in the strata, the tunnel was not completed until 1837, when Sydney was again in the grip of a prolonged drought. As work had proceeded, however, seepage springs were tapped and in 1830 these began to supply sufficient drinkable water to the public by means of a pipe carried on trestles a short distance into Hyde Park to facilitate the filling of water carts. Later, in 1833, the water was carried in pipes to the Port for the use of shipping and sold at 1s. od. per ton.

Busby's tunnel commenced at a point near the present Cleveland Street entrance to Centennial Park. It passed under the Agricultural Society's ground and the old Paddington Rifle Range, then under Park Road and the grounds of Victoria Barracks. It ran under Oxford Street near Flinders Street and ended in Hyde Park near the Oxford Street entrance. The line of pipes already mentioned extended from the end of the tunnel to a point near the corner of Park and Elizabeth Streets, where the regulator was fixed and the supply drawn off into water carts and other receptacles.

The bore was a little more than  $2\frac{1}{8}$  miles long and averaged 5-ft. high and 4-ft. wide. It had 28 vertical shafts ranging from 20-ft. to 28-ft. deep. The removal of 255,930 cubic feet of spoil, mostly rock, was involved, and the whole project is reputed to have cost £24,000.

